

# **THE REAL REPUBLICAN AGENDA:**

## *Republicans Pay Lip Service to Transparency in Government, Record Reveals Reality*

Today Republicans unveiled an agenda that talks about the importance of open and transparent government, but a look at their record on those issues shows a very different story. While Republicans may talk a big game, they certainly haven't lived up to it. A return to power won't change that.

### **Republicans' Era of Corruption**

During their 12 years in control of the House, they failed to protect the public interest. Majority Leader Tom DeLay ran the "K Street Project" that attempted to influence employment decisions of lobbying firms in exchange for political access. They allowed the practice of accepting gifts, travel on private jets, and meals from lobbyists to flourish. They failed to require frequent and thorough disclosure of travel, including House pre-approval of all officially connected travel, and more rigorous disclosure of lobbyist activity and finances. The use of earmarks exploded, with no transparency to let people know for whom Members were making requests for. And they weakened the bipartisan Ethics Committee – even firing the Republican Chair after it admonished Tom DeLay.

Democrats passed the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act when we came to power in 2007, which addressed the ethics problems that flourished under the Republican majority, reined in earmarks, and made them transparent. Democrats also created the Office of Congressional Ethics. Both measures passed despite Republican opposition.

*"That bill represents the most far-reaching attempt at ethics reform since Watergate..."* [Washington Post, 9/3/07]

### **House Republicans Backpedal on Earmarks Ban**

The last time Republicans had control of the House, they nearly quadrupled the number of earmarks from 4,000 in 1994 to over 15,000 at the end of the 109th Congress in 2005. Now that they are in the minority, Congressional Republicans adopted a year-long earmark ban in a transparently political move. Though they would like Americans to believe they are concerned with transparency and accountability, it has only been six months since they've instituted their ban and already Republicans are turning back on their promise.

*Flashback: "Today, House Republicans took an important step toward showing the American people we're serious about reform by adopting an*

*Prepared by the Office of the Majority Leader Steny H. Hoyer, 9/23/10*

*immediate, unilateral ban on all earmarks,' said House Minority Leader John A. Boehner" [Washington Times, 3/11/10]*

Six months later: *"With their eyes on a House majority, Republicans are leaving the door open to allowing earmarks after a one-year party-imposed moratorium."* [Politico, 9/16/10]

### **Republicans Transparent Hypocrisy**

The Republicans demand to have an adequate amount of time to review legislation before it is voted on, but from 1995-2006, they held themselves to a different standard. During that time, they waived public review, forced votes less than a day after legislation was completed, often in the middle of the night, and added in last minute provisions to protect special interests in completed conference reports.

*"Rep. David Dreier (R-CA), ranking member of the Rules Committee, confessed that Republicans ignored the 72 hour requirement during the 12 years that they controlled Congress: 'Absolutely – it is among the most commonly waived rules the House has.'"* [Hill, 10/2/2009]

Their record offers a clear contrast to the Democrats' landmark government reform legislation, which was the toughest ethics reform in a generation. While Republicans pay lip service today to transparency and accountability, Democrats have a proven record of it.